

70-B-511 NRO History File

NRO - Organization  
Approved For Release 2005/04/22 : CIA-RDP85B00803R000100150067-5

Memo to DCI from RMB 10 Jan 1962 S/Eyes only

*Subject: Technical Intelligence Collection -*

"4. With respect to the National Reconnaissance Office, I have noted the views you expressed to Messrs. Gilpatric and Charyk as summarized in your memo for rec of 3 Jan. On this matter, again, I will simply summarize certain views without supporting justification.

First, If there is to be a N R O with a single head, he must have the responsibility and authority (subject, of course, to his superiors) for major systems decisions in the development phase and for major operational decisions in the operational phase. Obviously he wld make such decisions within the constraints imposed in the form of budgetary limitations, intelligence requirements (which wld emanate from the USIB) and natl policy.

Second. It will be difficult under the most favorable circo for an individual placed in either the Agency or the Department of Defense to exercise this authority over resources controlled by the other of the two partner agencies.

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Third. Other than in the OX program, all the funds and the vast preponderance of resources in the form of technical personnel, operational

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personnel, and facilities belong to the Department of Defense. The above difficulty would be maximized in a situation in which an officer of the Agency was expected to exercise control over those resources. Moreover, it would be virtually infeasible to transfer the resources in question to the control of the Agency, as is being done with funds and personnel in the OX program because the resources employed in satellite programs are not separable from the total resources of the Department of Defense.

Fourth. Accordingly, by far the easiest way to create a unified N R O wld be to place its Director in the DOD and to limit the Agency's role in recon programs to the performance of certain specified functions. Notably procurement and assistance with problems of security and cover, under his direction. This wld not, of course, dilute the USIB's responsibility for rqmts and need involve no change in the status of the P I C.

5. There are, I think, two other possible arrangements that would be consistent with good management. One wld be to abandon the notion of a N R O and to place the Agency in the DOD. The other would be to place the Agency and responsibility for all satellite programs with the DOD.

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Each agency could then seek such support as it required from the other. The other solution wld be to make the N R O into a truly joint project organization headed by a director responsible to both the DCI and the SecDef. Under this conception, all the resources required for the conduct of N r programs shld be assigned by the two parent agencies to the N R O and shld be directly controlldd by the N R O. Its T/O shld include personnel in Wash, in proj offices at contractor's plants, and in the oprnl control center at Sunnyvale that are directly engaged in the development and opn of recon systems. Its budget shld cover the full costs of these programs. It shld be empowered to execute contracts and carry out procurement under the authority of the SecDef for all overt activities and under that of the DCI where security so required.

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It wld not of course, represent a drastically different arrangement from that which wld result from simply placing the N R O within the DOD. It wld require more surgery than the latter arrangement. On the other hand, it has the great advantage that the provision of joint control by the DCI and the SecDef wld serve as a protection against

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the absorption of these functions by the military services. Hopefully, the opportunity for secure and technically venturesome development could be maintained.

/s/ RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
DD(Plans)

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